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## Safety Tips for Children: Sexual Assault

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Most grown-ups are nice to kids and care about what happens to them. But every now and then there are grown-ups who try to touch a child in a way that is not okay. It might be a person you know and trust, like a relative, teacher or neighbor.

### There are a few things you should know that can help if this ever happens to you:

- Your body belongs to you.
- No one has the right to touch you, if you don't want them to. That includes teachers, grandparents, uncles and aunts, mom, dad -- everyone!
- There are places on your body that are private -- like places your swimming suit covers -- that an adult should not try to touch, unless it's the doctor and your parent or guardian is in the room with you.
- Trust your feelings. If something feels funny or wrong to you, YOU CAN SAY NO. It is good to say no to an adult who tries to do something that is wrong.
- Tell someone you trust what happened, even if the person said it was a secret or that they would hurt you or someone else if you told.
- If someone does something to you that is wrong, they may tell you it is a special secret or make you promise not to tell. **TELL!** It is absolutely okay to break this kind of promise -- the person who made you promise knows that they are doing something very wrong.
- Keep telling until someone listens. Some adults do not know what to do when a young person tells them about sexual abuse. An adult may tell you not to talk about it or to forget it. They may even accuse you of making up stories. Don't give up. Find someone to tell who will help. The adult who gave you this paper cares about you. She or he might be a good person for you to talk to.

### Remember, adults and older kids should :

- **Never** ask you to keep a secret about touching.
- **Never** touch you anywhere that is private, like where your bathing suit covers you.
- **Never** ask you to touch them anywhere private.
- **Never** reach under your clothes or try to get you to take off your clothes.
- **Never** ask you to take off their clothes.
- **Never** ask you to keep a secret about something wrong.
- **Never** try to take pictures of you without your clothes.
- **Never** ask you to touch yourself or other kids anywhere private.

## Preventing Abduction

- Don't play in deserted areas -- such as empty playgrounds, parks, construction sites or dumps.

- Stay with your mom or dad in public places or use the buddy system. Play, walk, bike and skate with a friend.
- If you are out somewhere with an adult and you lose them, don't go looking for them. If you are in a store, go to the cashier or security guard and ask for help. If you can't find a cashier or security guard and you are in trouble, look for a woman with small children for help.
- Stay alert and trust your instincts. If something doesn't feel right, like you think someone is following you, you are probably right. Try to notice if an adult is hanging around your school playground, your park or yard, and then go to where you know you can find other people.
- If you think someone is following you, cross the street and go into a store. Tell a police officer or a mother with a child. Don't try to hide -- go to where you know you can find other people.
- If someone tries to grab you, kick, punch and yell: "NO! I don't know you! You aren't my Mom (or Dad)!"
- If the person is in a car, stay as far away from the car as you can. Go into a store or turn around, and walk or run in the opposite direction the car is going.
- **NEVER**, ever hitchhike or accept a ride from someone. Don't go near a stranger's car. **NEVER** get into a car with someone you don't know, for any reason. Sometimes people use tricks -- like saying your mom is hurt, or they lost their dog or kitten -- to try and get you to go with them. **DO NOT GO WITH THEM!**
- If someone does manage to get you in their car, do not put on your seatbelt. Jump out when you see people and the car has to make a stop.

### If you are trapped in an abductor's car:

- Don't sit there quietly. The person is taking you somewhere and wants to hurt you.
- If the car has back doors, try to scramble quickly to the back seat while the car is moving.
- Try to jump out of a car that is going slow or has to stop. Try to open a window and scream.
- Try to reach over and blow the horn, or grab the steering wheel. Scream as loud as you can while you do this.
- If the car is stopped or slowed behind another car, reach over with your foot and quickly stomp on the gas pedal as hard and as long as you can.
- This is a time you will be much safer if you cause an accident than if you behave.

## Safety at Home

- Many kids get home before their parents. If you come home before your mom or dad, make sure the first thing you do is call and let your mom or dad know you got home okay.
- If you come home and a window in your house is broken or a door is open that shouldn't be, don't go in. Go to a trusted neighbor, or find a phone and call 911.
- If you have to stay after school or want to play or study with a friend, tell your mom or dad.
- Don't leave your home without asking your mom or dad first. Make sure a parent knows where you are going and for how long. Always tell your mom or dad where you will be and when you will be home.
- When your family is home and the doorbell rings, always find out who it is and ask your mom or dad before you open the door.
- If you are home alone, never open the door -- unless you can see that it is a relative or a specific person who your mom or dad said would come over to stay with you.
- **NEVER** tell someone you are home alone, whether they call on the phone or come by your house. Ask your mom or dad what they would like you to say, like: "My Dad's in the shower, can he call you when he gets out?"
- **NEVER** give information to anyone over the phone about yourself, your family or where you live. Hang up on anyone who calls to bother you or who says bad things on the phone.
- Ask your mom or dad for permission to go outside of your play area or yard or to go into someone's home.

- If you have a babysitter that hits you, touches you or makes you play games that embarrass you, tell a trusted adult, even if the babysitter told you not to.
- Keep all the windows and doors in your home locked.
- If someone tries to break into your home, call **911** immediately and give them your full address, including your apartment number if you have one. Tell them that you are at home and someone is trying to break in. Then, try calling a neighbor you know is usually home. If you can get out of the house, get out. If you can hide, hide.

## Gun Safety

- If someone picks on you or threatens you, tell your parent or a trusted adult. You don't have to deal with this by yourself.
- If you get into an argument, don't let it grow into a fight. Cool off . . . walk away if that would help.
- Don't carry a weapon. You could hurt or kill someone or yourself without meaning to. The weapon could also end up being used against you. Some kids say they carry a gun or knife for protection, but the truth is if you carry a weapon you are more likely to get hurt.
- If you find a gun anywhere, DON'T TOUCH IT. The gun could be loaded and dangerous. It could also be a gun that the police are looking for because it was used in a crime. Tell your mom or dad or a trusted adult or call 911 to tell the police you found a gun.
- If someone shows you a gun, DO NOT TOUCH IT. Guns are not toys. They can kill someone or hurt them very badly. Kids have been accidentally killed by guns, sometimes by their best friends.
- Tell the person that you don't want to be around guns because someone could get hurt or killed. Get away from the gun and the person.
- Tell a trusted adult about the gun. It's okay to tell about guns. You could help stop the person with the gun from getting hurt.
- If you hear gunfire, duck. Get down as low as you can and cover your head.

## Child Sexual Abuse Information for Middle School Students

### What is sexual abuse?

Sexual abuse is when someone older than you touches the private parts of your body (that's the parts your bathing suit covers) or has you touch the private parts of their body. It can also be when someone older tries to get you to take off your clothes or touches you or kisses you in a way that makes you feel uncomfortable.

### How do I tell what touching is bad?

Everyone likes to be hugged or touched by someone they care for. But there are some kinds of touching that are not considered good for kids. Some of this kind of touching might feel good. Some of this kind of touching might feel bad or even hurt. If you aren't sure about a touch, talk to a trusted adult about it.

### What kind of kids are sexually abused?

Any kid can be sexually abused. It can happen to boys or girls. It can happen to big kids or little kids--no matter how young or old, weak or strong. It is estimated that 1 in 5 kids is sexually abused.

### **Who abuses kids?**

Most adults care about kids and never sexually abuse them. But some people have serious problems and think it is okay to be sexual with a child. Sometimes a sexual abuser is a stranger, but usually a sexual abuser would be someone you know. It might be your parent, or step-parent, or a teacher, or a neighbor, or a minister or a friend of your parents. It might be someone in your family, or someone that you like a lot.

### **Why would someone do this?**

Someone who sexually abuses a child has a problem, and needs help. People can do bad things--even nice people. It is sometimes hard to believe that someone we love or who is nice to us can sexually abuse us.

### **Is it my fault if this happens to me?**

Never. Some kids blame themselves, but they shouldn't. Adults sometimes use tricks like telling you that you are bad and that this is why this happened. Also, the attention can sometimes seem nice. Maybe this person gives you really good gifts or money when he or she wants to touch you. Maybe this person is very gentle when he or she wants to touch you. Maybe it is the only time he or she is "nice" to you. But whether it is violent or gentle, it is very, very wrong and it must be stopped. No matter what, if you are being sexually abused, it is never your fault.

### **How can I stop it?**

The best way to stop sexual abuse is to talk about it. Sexual abuse is against the law. **YOU DO NOT HAVE TO KEEP IT A SECRET!** Even if the abuse only happens once, or seems like it's over, it's important to tell. The person who abused you will probably try to do this to many other boys and girls. There are many people who can help you and help the abuser, if you tell them what has happened.

### **What if I'm afraid to tell?**

People who touch children in inappropriate ways may tell children that something bad will happen if they ever tell anyone. Maybe someone told you that you would be hurt if you told. Or that someone you love wouldn't love you anymore. You may have been told things that scared you and made you very afraid. If the abuser is a family member, you may be afraid the family will break up if the secret is told. No matter what, it is important to tell an adult you trust about what has happened.

### **Will anyone believe me?**

Yes. There are many adults who will believe you and who will help you. Some adults may not want to believe that you could have been abused. Some adults may tell you to forget about it. If this happens to you, find someone else to tell. Keep telling until someone listens.

### **What will happen to the abuser if I tell?**

The abuser will get help. A person who sexually abuses children needs help. Most abusers can get counseling. If the abuser is someone in your family, you may see less of him or her for awhile. Because sexual abuse is against the law, some abusers might go to jail.

**There are many different ways children can be sexually abused. The following stories give examples of some different kinds of sexual abuse:**

- Denise was eleven and her breasts were beginning to grow. Her uncle started "accidentally" touching her breasts every chance he got. Later on, he would go into her bedroom and reach under the sheets and touch her breasts. Denise pretended to be asleep.
- Hector was ten and loved playing soccer. His coach gave him a lot of attention and would give him rides after practice. The coach told Hector that there was a special game they could play. The game was fun except for the part where the coach had Hector hold and touch his penis. Hector wanted to stop, but the coach said if he did, then he wouldn't get to play soccer anymore.
- Jenny was seven. She liked her mother's boyfriend because he always wanted her to dance with him, but he would kiss her and rub his body up against her and reach up under her dress when her mom was away. He said it was their special secret.
- Tyrone was fourteen. A twenty-five-old friend of his sister wanted to take Tyrone's picture. Tyrone thought it would be fun. Because it was a hot day, the photographer asked Tyrone to take off his shirt. Then she told Tyrone to take off his pants, like he was in an underwear commercial. When she told Tyrone to take off his underwear, he said no, but she told him that if he didn't she would show everyone the pictures of him in his underwear.
- Sarah was eleven and her stepfather was sexually abusing her. He said that Sarah's mom didn't love him, so he wanted Sarah to be his girlfriend. The abuse had gotten worse the last few months, but Sarah was too afraid to tell. Her stepfather said her mom would be hurt if Sarah told anyone. When her stepfather had sex with her, Sarah felt like she wanted to die.

**There are some important things for you to remember if you are sexually assaulted:**

- **It's your body.** No one has the right to touch you. You can say no.
- **Abuse is never your fault,** even if you don't say no.
- **Abuse always hurts.** It can hurt your feelings or your body.
- **Keep telling until someone listens.** Even if the first adult you tell doesn't help you, someone will. Telling the right person is the way to make abuse stop.
- **What happens next is not your fault.** When you tell about sexual abuse, the abuser will probably have to get help. Things may be

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